

# Agenda Item 33.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
180091	8 August 2018	Wokingham Without	Wokingham Without

<b>Applicant</b>	Mr M Phillips
<b>Site Address</b>	Hambridge Farm, Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 3BS
<b>Proposal</b>	Full planning application for the siting of temporary rural worker's dwelling
<b>Type</b>	Full
<b>PS Category</b>	13
<b>Officer</b>	Simon Taylor
<b>Reason for determination by committee</b>	Listed by Councillor Angus Ross

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on Wednesday 12 September 2018
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Assistant Director – Place

<b>SUMMARY</b>
<p>Hambridge Farm is a short distance from the southern settlement boundary of Wokingham. It consists of 6.7ha of agricultural land and since 2014, has been used for the rearing of calves and pigs. With an intended expansion in livestock numbers, the application seeks planning permission for the establishment of a three bedroom mobile home adjacent to the two existing agricultural sheds to allow for on site management of livestock. The application form refers to a temporary dwelling but does not specify a time period.</p> <p>The application was supported by an agricultural appraisal, which detailed the need and sustainability of the farm and whether alternative accommodation in the area was available. The report was independently reviewed by an external agricultural consultant with additional information sought relating to existing and projected livestock numbers, current profit and loss accounts, forward cashflow projections and staffing intentions. The final review of the agricultural appraisal indicated that there was an essential need, there was a lack of suitable alternative accommodation in the local area and that it was financially sustainable. The principle of the development in the countryside is therefore acceptable.</p> <p>The remainder of the application is acceptable, in terms of impact upon the character of the area, neighbour amenity, landscaping, trees, flooding, drainage and ecology. There is sufficient provision for parking and access via the existing entrance on Easthampstead is supported by Council's Highways Officer. The application is subject to the engrossment of a s106 agreement relating to mitigation measures and monitoring for the likely impact upon the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area.</p> <p>Subject to further conditions limiting the mobile home to being occupied by an immediate farm worker and its dependents, its removal if the farm ceases to operate and the granting of a temporary permission (in Conditions 5, 6 and 7 respectively), the application is recommended for conditional approval.</p>

## PLANNING STATUS

- Countryside
- Adjoining South Wokingham SDL (northern boundary)
- Green Route enhancement area
- Opposite archaeological site
- Flood Zone 1 (rear of site is within Flood Zones 2/3)
- South East Water consultation zone
- Farnborough Aerodrome consultation zone
- Wind turbine safeguarding zone
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (5km zone)

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:**

- A. Completion of a legal agreement to satisfy obligations with respect to mitigation measures and monitoring to offset against impacts upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area**
- B. Conditions and informatives:**

### ***Conditions***

1) Timescale

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

*Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

2) Approved details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application unnumbered and undated Site Plan, Floor Plan and Elevation Plan, received by the local planning authority on 12 January 2018. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless other minor variations are agreed in writing after the date of this permission and before implementation with the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*

3) Landscaping details

Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a planting scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, density, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. It is to take account of the following requirements:

- a) An additional row of hedges along Easthampstead Road set behind the

existing hedgerow by 500mm and including Holly and Yew (evergreens), Hawthorn, Guelder rose and Blackthorn and Honeysuckle to scramble through the hedge at 1m centres

- b) Oak transplants along the hedgerow along Easthampstead Road (but not set into the hedge to avoid being cut with flail), at no less than 2m in height at 10m centres, double staked, tied and protected with guards
- c) Retention of a 2.4m x 215m visibility splay from the centreline of the existing access drive
- d) A native hedgerow mix around the curtilage of the mobile home, including all of the above in addition to Field Maple, Hazel and Beech, at 10m centres with Sorbus, Malus and Field Maple natives

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s). Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure adequate planting in the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.*

4) Drainage details

The mobile home shall not be occupied until details of foul and storm water sewage disposal have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved method of disposal shall be permanently so-retained for the life of the development.

*Reason: In order to ensure satisfactory provision is made for foul and storm water drainage. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.*

5) Development to be removed after temporary period

The mobile home hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its original condition and reseeded with grass on or before three years from the date of this planning permission, in accordance with a scheme of work that shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: The type of building is not one that the local planning authority is prepared to approve other than for a limited period, having regard to the materials and type of structure proposed and its location within the countryside. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

6) Cessation of agricultural use

If the agricultural farm at Hambridge Farm should cease operating, then it shall be removed from the land, and the land shall be restored to its condition before the development took place within 3 months of the date that the agricultural use

ceased, in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

*Reason: The mobile home hereby approved would constitute inappropriate development in the countryside if it were not for the rural worker's connection.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 6 (Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes), Core Strategy policies CP11.*

7) Restriction of agricultural occupancy

The occupation of the mobile home shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working within the subject agricultural holding, and to any resident dependants.

*Reason: The site is within an area where a dwelling would not normally be permitted and permission is only granted because the dwelling is intended to serve the needs of agriculture. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 6 (Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes), Core Strategy policies CP11.*

8) Car parking

The mobile home hereby permitted shall not be occupied or used until the vehicle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking space shall be permanently maintained and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

*Reason: To ensure adequate on-site parking provision in the interests of highway safety, convenience and amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

9) Cycle parking

The mobile home hereby permitted shall not be occupied or used until secure parking for cycles has been provided. The cycle parking shall be permanently so-retained for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

*Reason: To encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

10) Access surfacing

The mobile home hereby permitted shall not be occupied or used until the existing vehicular access to Easthampstead Road has been surfaced with a permeable and bonded material across the entire width of the access for a distance of 10 metres measured from the carriageway edge.

*Reason: To avoid spillage of loose material onto the highway, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6.*

11) Permeable surfacing

The car parking area and access thereto shall consist of porous materials and shall thereafter be so-retained.

*Reason: To retain greenfield characteristics in terms of surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC10.*

12) Location of gate

The mobile home hereby permitted shall not be occupied or used until the existing vehicular entrance gates (or any new entrance gates) are relocated/erected no closer than 10 metres from the highway boundary and so as to open away from the highway.

*Reason: To ensure that vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst waiting for gates or barriers to be opened or closed, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 and CP6.*

13) Bin storage

The mobile home hereby permitted shall not be occupied or used until a bin storage area has been provided. The bin storage area and facilities shall be permanently so-retained and used for no purpose other than the temporary storage of refuse and recyclable materials.

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenities and functional development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.*

14) External storage

With the exception of the waste storage area, no materials, plant, machinery, containers or equipment shall be stored on the site outside buildings

*Reason: In order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

**Informatives**

1) Section 106 Agreement

This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act dated 12 September 2018, the obligations in which relate to this development.

2) Pre Commencement Conditions

The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The

information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.

3) Changes to the Approved Plans

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

4) Protected Species

The applicant is reminded that should there be any change from the approved drawings during the build of the development this may require a fresh planning application if the changes differ materially from the approved details. Non-material changes may be formalised by way of an application under s.96A Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

5) CIL Liable Development

The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development. For more information see - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>

6) Proactive and Positive Discussion

The development hereby permitted is liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Liability Notice issued by Wokingham Borough Council will state the current chargeable amount. A revised Liability Notice will be issued if this amount changes. Anyone can formally assume liability to pay, but if no one does so then liability will rest with the landowner. There are certain legal requirements that must be complied with. For instance, whoever will pay the levy must submit an Assumption of Liability form and a Commencement Notice to Wokingham Borough Council prior to commencement of development. For more information see - <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/developers/cil/cil-processes/>

**PLANNING HISTORY**

<b>App Number</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>
F/2015/0893	Erection of livestock shed and construction of roof to existing barn (part-retrospective)	Approved 9 July 2015

**SUMMARY INFORMATION**

Site area	550m2 plot within 6.7ha agricultural holding
-----------	--

Existing units	Two agricultural sheds
Proposed units	One temporary mobile home
Previous land use	Agricultural farm
Existing parking spaces	No formal spaces
Proposed parking spaces	3 formalised uncovered spaces

<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
WBC Ecology	No objection, as noted in 'Ecology'
WBC Highways	No objection, as noted in 'Access and Movement'
WBC Trees and Landscaping	No objection, as noted in 'Trees and Landscaping'
Agricultural consultant	No objection, as noted in 'Principle of Development'

<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b>	
Wokingham Without Parish Council	<p>No objection, subject to conditions relating to the mobile home being temporary, for a rural worker only and the application of CIL.</p> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Refer to Conditions 5 and 7 and Informative 5 respectively.</p>
Ward Member	<p>Councillor Angus Ross has listed the application for the Planning Committee on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive scale for a rural worker's dwelling</li> <li>• Siting in relation to the road</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The proposal is acceptable, as noted in 'Character of the Area'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of landscaping plan</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Council's Trees and Landscape Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection, subject to landscaping details as a pre commencement condition (Condition 3). Refer to 'Landscaping and Trees' for further comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No ecology report</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed the proposal and raises no objection. Refer to 'Ecology' for further comment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access/egress onto Easthampstead Road</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Council's Highways Officer notes that access onto Easthampstead Road is acceptable, as noted in 'Access and Movement'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will removal be a condition of approval?</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Condition 7 requires the mobile home to be removed after three years, unless otherwise confirmed in writing by the Council.</p>

<p>Neighbours</p>	<p>The application was consulted to neighbours from 31 January to 28 February 2018 with three submissions received, one of which represented five separate residential properties and another which supported the application.</p> <p>The objections raised the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no essential need for the dwelling for animal welfare, there are other existing dwellings in the area for sale/rent and the current operations allow a profitable business operation</li> <li>• Does not meet paragraph 28 of the NPPF as it is not of good design, does not involve a conversion and the scale of the business does not promote diversification of the business</li> <li>• The business is already successful despite the hardship of travelling from off site</li> <li>• It does not meet paragraph 55 of the NPPF as there is insufficient livestock to support the need</li> <li>• There is no evidence of a diverse agricultural operation on the site</li> <li>• Deficiencies in the barn are not sufficient to necessitate the establish of a rural worker on site</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> A review of the agricultural justification has been undertaken in 'Principle of Development'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development is in the countryside, would erode the openness of the agricultural land and extend development outside the settlement boundary</li> <li>• The proposal would fail Policy CP11 as it involves encroachment</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Refer to 'Principle of Development'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design and access statement and agricultural statement contradict each other in terms of the intended occupants</li> <li>• The size of the dwelling is excessive for its intended purpose</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> Occupation of the mobile home is discussed in 'Principle of Development' and enforced in Condition 7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The siting of the dwelling is inappropriate due to its visibility and amenity impacts and there are better locations for such a development</li> <li>• Adversely visible from the road, contrary to the design and access statement</li> <li>• The mobile home has a poor appearance and is out of context with surrounding countryside and development</li> <li>• Car parking spaces add additional scale</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> The mobile home has a satisfactory impact upon the area, as noted in 'Character of the Area'.</p>
-------------------	---

- No landscape plan has been provided
- Hedgerow and trees have been removed

Officer comment: Refer to 'Landscaping and Trees'.

- Loss of privacy

Officer comment: Refer to 'Residential Amenities'.

- Three year time period will inevitably be more permanent as the need would have been established

Officer comment: The temporary nature of the approval addresses existing need and allows for future assessment.

- The farm comprises two plots and could be subdivided into a residential and agricultural plot, with barn conversions possible

Officer comment: This is not proposed in this planning application.

- There are previous applications for similar schemes at Priors Farm (CLP/2015/0445) and Southfork Farm (F/2012/1554) on Easthampstead Road that have been refused

Officer comment: These applications are discussed in 'Principle of Development'.

The submission for the proposal appears to be a direct response to the submissions against the proposal. It states that

- The building is temporary and can be removed if the business is not profitable
- The previous planning applications at Southfork Farm and Priors Farm are not comparable
- There are sufficient access sightlines
- The business is viable
- There is no possibility of converting an existing building
- There is no loss of privacy
- Observations of past activities are irrelevant
- Stocking numbers would not be unknown unless access is available
- There will be an improvement to the land

Officer comment: These comments are discussed throughout the body of the report.

#### **APPLICANTS POINTS**

- The dwelling is screened by existing hedgerow, within the built environment of Hambridge Farm and in sight and sound of livestock

- The temporary dwelling has a limited effect on the access, parking or amenity space arrangements of the property
- A safe and clear access exists for access into the holding
- The building will be a log cabin, sited for a temporary period
- There are no adverse effects on the flora and fauna and no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of this area
- There is an essential need for a dwelling on the unit
- Business accounts demonstrate that the agricultural enterprise is financially sustainable now and in the future
- There are no other dwellings in the locality that are suitable and available to meet the essential needs of the enterprise

## PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
	NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	CP1	Sustainable Development
	CP3	General Principles for Development
	CP6	Managing Travel Demand
	CP7	Biodiversity
	CP8	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
	CP9	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	CP11	Proposals outside development limits (including countryside)
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	CC01	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	CC03	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	CC04	Sustainable Design and Construction
	CC06	Noise
	CC07	Parking
	CC09	Development and Flood Risk (from all sources)
	CC10	Sustainable Drainage
	TB21	Landscape Character
	TB23	Biodiversity and Development
	TB25	Archaeology
Other Policies	BDG	Borough Design Guide (Section 4)
	SDC	Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary
	SPD	Planning Document
	DCLG	National Internal Space Standards

## PLANNING ISSUES

### Description of Development

1. The proposal involves the establishment of a mobile home comprising three bedrooms, a bathroom and living spaces. It includes access via the existing entrance to the farm and the formalisation of car parking for three vehicles alongside the mobile home. It will be sited perpendicular to Easthampstead Road and in close proximity to two existing sheds on the farm. It includes connection to a septic tank and provision of a soakaway.
2. Permission is sought for an unspecified temporary period and is intended to support a rural worker in the care and maintenance of the farm and animals within Hambridge Farm.

## Site Description

3. The site is located on the eastern side of Easthampstead Road within open countryside, 900m from the southern settlement boundary of Wokingham. The property is used for agricultural purposes and is known as Hambridge Farm with two sheds/barns sited parallel and perpendicular to the roadway with a proliferation of a variety of materials, tyres, building materials and debris behind.
4. Surrounding development comprises mostly farmland with dwellings interspersed across the countryside. The boundary of the South Wokingham SDL adjoins the northern boundary of the farm, which is 90m to the north although this area of the SDL is yet to be assigned.

## Principle of Development

5. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. Policy CC01 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (DMM) states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
6. By virtue of its location in the countryside, Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy 2010 applies. It permits development outside of development limits only where it is sustainable, contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises, does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion away from the original buildings and is within a suitably located building appropriate for conversion. The explanatory notes state that proposals for agricultural workers dwellings will need to comply with this policy and PPS7 (within with the commencement of the NPPF).
7. In paragraph 79 of the NPPF, it notes that new housing should be avoided where it is isolated in the countryside, unless it is essential for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, amongst others. Paragraph 83 also states that policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by promoting the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
8. The proposal involves the establishment of a rural worker's dwelling (mobile home) measuring 72m<sup>2</sup> and comprising a master bedroom with ensuite, two single occupancy bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen, lounge room and dining room in addition to three car spaces and outdoor amenity space. It will be positioned within 15-25m of two existing agricultural sheds. The Design and Access Statement refers to the fact that the owners will reside within the home whilst the agricultural appraisal indicates that the owners and their son will occupy the home. The agent has now clarified that it is intended to be used as accommodation for the son of the owners of the farm who will work on site, along with his partner and two dependents. It is noted as being temporary but no time limit has been specified.
9. The application was accompanied by an agricultural appraisal prepared by Reading Agricultural Consultants demonstrating the need for the accommodation, its financial sustainability and a lack of suitable alternative accommodation that would serve the same need. It also noted that the farm holding relates to 6.7

hectares, with a further 33.5 hectares rented nearby. There is approval for two agricultural buildings on the farm. The current farming operations, commenced in 2014, consist of the rearing of 36 calves from 10 days to 18 months and pig breeding with seven sows and gilts and two boars and litters born every two months, with half sold at eight weeks and the other half at 55kg. It is intended that over time, calves will increase to 100 and pigs will increase to 50.

10. Site inspections were undertaken on 20 February and 4 June 2018 whereby it is acknowledged that there has been growth in livestock numbers, which reflects spring calving. As such, there is no dispute raised in relation to existing and projected stocking numbers.
11. Since the NPPF was published, it has become generally well established that applications for a rural worker's dwelling need to be considered against the following criteria:
  - a) Whether there is an essential need for a rural worker to live on site
  - b) Whether that need can be met by existing accommodation
  - c) Whether the enterprise is financially viable or sustainable
  - d) Whether other relevant considerations, such as siting and size, are acceptable
12. The application has been independently reviewed and additional information sought relating to the above points including details surroundings its financial sustainability (including but not limited to projected livestock numbers, current profit and loss accounts, forward cashflow projections and staffing intentions).
13. Essential need is determined by probability, frequency and severity of any problems with livestock and whether a resident worker would resolve these problems. Whether it requires the worker to live on site depends on the scale of the enterprise and the consequent frequency and timescale of potential problems.
14. Sows will be kept in the sheds when farrowing, which currently occurs every two months (increasing to monthly). This requires regular inspections of the sow (often at night) whilst piglets will require care and observation.
15. 50 calves will initially be housed in one of the agricultural buildings and 20 cows will be winter housed in the other. In time, more calves will be kept and will be accommodated in a, yet to be built, third shed. Upwards of 25 calves will be under 3 months, which will require additional monitoring. When grazing, observation for sick calves is required although this in itself would not necessarily require on site living. Some grazing will occur on the nearby rented property.
16. With reference to *John Nix Farm Management Pocketbook 83rd Ed*, the operation is also estimated to be the equivalent of 0.58 full time workers, increasing to 1.5 full time workers based on projections.
17. The conclusion is that there is a functional need that cannot be fulfilled from an off site location. This is irrespective of whether a third shed is built.
18. Existing accommodation should be in the immediate vicinity to account for the nature of the work. The resident worker currently lives in Hurst, some six miles

away. At the time of the report, there were 22 properties for sale within a mile radius, ranging from £197,967 for a two bed property to larger properties in excess of £1m. The rental market is smaller, with three properties within a mile for circa. £1,000 pcm. Nonetheless, when acknowledging the resident dependents and the strong need for an on-site worker, it is concluded that there are no dwellings sufficiently close to the farm to meet that need.

19. Financial viability was not demonstrated in 2015, 2016 or 2017, even for a part time wage. However, further forecasting figures were provided whereby it was concluded that keeping cattle to 18 months (which also requires an additional shed) should ensure that *'there is sufficient profit projected to cover increased costs and still show viability'*. The provision of on site accommodation would allow for better management and health of livestock and investment in labour hours, leading to improved efficiency, lower overheads (including with travel to and from the site) and the growth of the business. Additionally, increased stocking levels would suggest that there is an intention to invest in the business with the establishment of a third shed.
20. Condition 5 specifies a temporary permission for three years. This allows growth of the business but also takes account of the potential for it not to be profitable.
21. In terms of other considerations, the mobile home is appropriately sited. It is in close proximity to allow sight and sound of livestock and it is located forward of the existing sheds, which would ensure that livestock are not unnecessarily disturbed. At three bedrooms, the size of the home is reflective of the rural worker's intention to accommodate his partner and two dependents. At 12.4m (length) x 6.1m (width) x 2.9m (ceiling height), it also accords with the definition outlined in Section 13(2) of the Caravan Act of 1968, which has a limit of 20m x 6.7m x 3.08m. In this respect, there are no particular circumstances that would suggest that the mobile home is not required.
22. The proposal meets the above tests for a rural worker's dwelling, the dwelling is of an appropriate design (see 'Character of the Area') and it accords with the intent of paragraphs 28 and 55 of the NPPF.
23. In terms of Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy, it has been demonstrated that the proposal is (economically) sustainable and that it supports a rural enterprise. However, there is a departure insofar as it could be argued that it is not diverse (limited to pigs and cows only), it leads to additional encroachment and does not convert an existing building.
24. However, the principle of the rural worker's dwelling has been established in terms of the intent of the NPPF and allowing the development would allow for the growth and diversification of the farm. There is some encroachment, but this is to be anticipated. Indeed, it is not unacceptable given the demonstrated need and the acceptable impact upon the openness of the countryside. Furthermore, it is not envisaged that the intent of the third criteria in Policy CP11 (utilising an existing building) would render the proposal unacceptable, particularly when there are no such buildings suitable for residential conversion.
25. The principle of the development is therefore satisfactory, subject to it being a temporary permission (Condition 5), it being removed if the business is no longer

profitable (Condition 6) and restrictions limiting the occupants to the resident worker and their dependents (Condition 7).

26. A submission against the proposal included reference to nearby applications. For completeness, they are discussed below:
- a) CLP/2015/0445: related to the siting of a caravan two properties to the south at Priors Farm. It was refused because Council was not satisfied that it met the size limitations to be defined as a caravan. It was allowed at appeal but the assessment did not consider the need for a rural worker's dwelling
  - b) F/2012/1554: related to an alpaca farm on the adjoining property to the south (Southfork Farm). An assessment of this application concluded that the budget was overly optimistic and that it had already operated for 31 years without the need for a rural worker's dwelling

### **Character of the Area**

27. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high quality design. Other relevant policies in the Borough Design SPD include:
- Policies R1 and RD1, which require that development retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute to the character and biodiversity of the area
  - Policy R11, which requires a coherent street character in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion and height
  - Policies RD6 and RD7, which states the elevations are to be well composed, proportioned and detailed and comprise of appropriate materials and colours
28. The Design and Access Statement suggests that the mobile home will be screened from Easthampstead Road due to existing hedgerow. However, this is disputed, with it either being an incorrect statement or the hedgerow having been depleted since the preparation of the statement.
29. The mobile home has a modest scale with footprint that is approximately 35% of the size of the smaller of the two existing sheds. In this respect, does not overwhelm or dominate the countryside in the context of its surrounding setting. It is some 15m from the nearest agricultural building. Whilst it is readily apparent and distinct from the other agricultural buildings, it is sited where it allows for some separation but allows for monitoring of livestock in the shed. It is also not inappropriately located in terms of being perceived as an encroachment of development away from the approved buildings.
30. It is sited so that it is perpendicular to the roadway, consistent with the shed to the immediate north. Whilst the front elevation does not present to the site frontage, it remains visible in the streetscene and has an acceptable presentation.
31. It comprises a simple rectangular form that is indicative of a mobile home. However, it also includes a pitched roof with gable ends to the south western and north eastern side elevations, a porch delineating the main entrance and the south western elevation is comprised almost entirely of full height glazing. Whilst it is simple in form, the use of materials, glazing, articulation and roof form achieves a satisfactory building design that complements the existing buildings and the countryside location.

32. Whilst it contributes to additional bulk on the property, albeit of a minimal extent, it is temporary in nature, which is a better outcome for the countryside than the establishment of a permanent building.
33. Policy P2 of the Borough Design Guide ensures that parking is provided in a manner that is compatible with the local character. The parking spaces will be adjacent to the mobile home and will be uncovered such that they will be visible from the roadway. However, the gravel drive and the appearance of up to three vehicles in the wider views of the farm would not be significantly dissimilar to the arrangement associated with the existing farm operations. As such, there are no objections to the parking arrangement on character grounds.
34. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CP3 and the guidelines in the Borough Design Guide, subject to additional landscaping around the dwelling and along the frontage (Condition 3).

## **Housing Design**

### Internal Amenity

35. Policy TB07 of the MDD and Policy R17 of the Borough Design SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity. A minimum standard of 87m<sup>2</sup> applies for a 3-bedroom home with additional standards of 12m<sup>2</sup> for bedrooms and 25m<sup>2</sup> for combined living areas.
36. The mobile home has a floor area of 70m<sup>2</sup>, with the largest of the three bedrooms measuring 8.5m<sup>2</sup> and living area of 13m<sup>2</sup>. Whilst deficient, the size of the mobile home serves its purpose as non-permanent accommodation for an on-site worker and their dependents. The building has a relative open plan, dual aspect, southern orientation, which ensures good internal amenity for the occupants in accordance with Policies TB07 and R17.

### External Amenity

37. Policy R16 of the Borough Design Guide requires a minimum depth of 11m for rear gardens with sunlight access and sufficient area for play and clothes drying. The proposal will include a 6m x 14m rear garden and 6m x 19m front garden, which are more than sufficient for outdoor amenity space.

### Accessibility

38. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy aims for the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities. The floor level of the mobile home will be 200mm above the existing ground level, but could be readily adapted for disabled/wheelchair access although its temporary nature is unlikely to necessitate this.

## **Residential Amenities**

39. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity. The nearest residential neighbours are more than 190m away such that there are no

perceived amenity issues, including access to daylight and sunlight, acoustic and visual privacy or sense of enclosure.

## **Access and Movement**

### Car Parking

40. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street parking standards. The proposal makes provision for three parking spaces, which complies with the above requirements. Compliance is required in Condition 8.

### Cycle Parking

41. Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum cycle parking standards and Policies P2 and P3 of the Borough Design Guide require that it is conveniently located, secure, undercover and located where it is compatible in the streetscene. Cycle parking is not indicated on the plans but there is ample space for its provision in accordance with the above policies. This forms Condition 9.

### Access and Traffic Generation

42. Access will be via the existing farm entrance, which has been reviewed by Council's Highways Officer and is found to be acceptable in terms of visibility, egress and any impacts upon existing traffic movements along Easthampstead Road. Condition 3 requires additional hedgerow to the frontage and to ensure the retention of adequate sightlines onto Easthampstead Road, the condition also requires the retention of a 215m splay (to account for a 60mph speed limit on this road. Furthermore, given the intended increase in livestock numbers, Condition 12 also requires the relocation of the existing gates (or any new gates) to be located no closer than 10m from Easthampstead to ensure that lorries do not encroach onto the roadway when waiting for the gate to be opened.
43. With the provision of on site residential accommodation for the existing farm, there is unlikely to be any noticeable change to traffic movements.

## **Flooding and Drainage**

### Flooding

44. Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, which includes the location of the dwelling and access onto Easthampstead Road. There is no increased flood risk and the proposal is acceptable in terms of Policy CC09.

### Drainage

45. Policy CC10 of the MDD Local Plan requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. The application form nominates the use of a soakaway and given its location within a farm, there are no objections to the application on drainage grounds. It is therefore acceptable in terms of Policy CC10.

46. Policy R23 of the Borough Design Guide notes that parking spaces must be paved with permeable surfaces to avoid any increase in surface water run-off. This is required by Condition 4.

### **Landscape and Trees**

47. Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. Policy R14 of the Borough Design Guide seeks to ensure well-designed hard and soft landscaping that complements housing.
48. The site is located in Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment Area N1 'Holme Green Pastoral Sandy Lowland', and in the countryside, and has the following characteristics:
- An agricultural landscape defined predominantly by pastoral farming contained within medium-sized and geometrically shaped fields and largely divided by post and wire and rough timber fencing
  - Small scale 'hobby' farming including a number of equestrian paddocks and exercising areas bound by often unkempt fencing and supported by temporary-looking facilities such as caravans and sheds
  - Scrubby vegetation including wooded tributaries, shelterbelts with gorse, bramble and bracken
  - A landscape evoking a generally peaceful character
49. The landscape is considered to be of moderate quality, character and condition, and moderate sensitivity. The moderate quality relates to the positive aspects such as open pastoral landscape against the loss of traditional field boundaries and an untidy appearance overall from temporary structures and a sense of neglect of landscape features such as hedgerows. The key issues affecting the landscape character is the decline in traditional management of hedgerows and trees such as Oak, especially along roadsides contributing to an unkempt perception.
50. The field boundary adjacent to the road has been planted with a native hedgerow but this has yet to mature to sufficient stature to provide any meaningful screening (although a review of Google Street View indicates that the site benefited from a more established hedgerow in the past and that it may have eroded over time). Nonetheless, the area around the proposed dwelling is currently devoid of landscape features.
51. The information submitted with this application is sufficient for the proper assessment of the application and Council's Trees Officer raises no objection. However, to ensure that there is an enhancement to the presentation and screening of the mobile home from the roadway, additional hedgerow planting along Easthampstead Road and tree plantings around the dwelling are specified in Condition 3. It would take the form of a Planting Plan, showing plant schedule, listing species, size, density and numbers.
52. The hedgerow is to be set back from the existing hedge by 500mm and is to include Holly and Yew (evergreens) with the standard deciduous; Hawthorn, Guelder rose and Blackthorn as well as Honeysuckle to scramble through the

hedge at 1m centres. Additionally, Oak transplants at no less than 2m in height at 10m centres are to be planted along the roadway. These are to be double staked, tied, protected with guards and located so that they are not set into hedge to avoid being cut with flail.

53. The planting around the proposed dwelling should consist of native hedgerow mix to include all of the above species in addition to Field Maple, Hazel and Beech. Trees at 10m centres should include natives such as Sorbus, Malus and Field Maple.

### **Ecology**

54. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network. Council's Ecology Officer has noted that considering only a small area of grassland will be affected, it is unlikely that any protected species or habitats will be adversely affected by the proposal and no objection is raised.

### **Archaeology**

55. Policy TB25 of the MDD Local Plan requires the retention of archaeological sites in situ. The land to the south west of the site on the opposite side of Easthampstead Road is nominated as containing potential archaeological deposits. However, given the separation distance of 40m, the temporary nature of the home and the limited extent of any groundworks, no further concerns are raised.

### **Sustainable Design/Construction**

56. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD require sustainable design and conservation. Given the temporary and portable nature of the mobile home, the proposal is acceptable in terms of the above policies.

### **Waste Storage**

57. Policy CC04 of the MDD Local Plan requires adequate external storage for the segregation of waste as well as composting facilities. There are ample opportunities for appropriately located waste storage where it will be concealed from Easthampstead Road and this is specified in Condition 13.

### **Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA)**

58. Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy states that where development is likely to have an effect on the TBH SPA, it is required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.
59. The subject property involves an additional dwelling within 5km of the TBH SPA. Policy CP8 states that where there is a net increase in dwellings within 5km of the SPA, contributions to access management measures and monitoring in line with

the Delivery Framework will be required. The temporary nature of the dwelling does not negate the need to satisfy Policy CP8.

60. The mitigation measures are outlined in a Section 106 agreement in the form of the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at Rocks Nest Wood and a monetary contribution for ongoing monitoring. The planning permission is conditional on the completion of this agreement, which is yet to occur.

### **Affordable Housing**

61. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD specify an affordable housing rate of 40% for any development on 0.16 hectares or larger. With the proposal involving one (temporary) dwelling on 550m<sup>2</sup> of land, there is no requirement for affordable housing.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

62. The application is liable for CIL because it involves the creation of a new residential dwelling. This is noted in Informative 5.

### **CONCLUSION**

63. The proposal satisfies the established tests relating to need, sustainability, alternative accommodation and other factors and there is a demonstrated need for a temporary resident worker's dwelling to support the growth of the existing farm operations. The principle of the development in the countryside is therefore acceptable and when subject to conditions relating to permanence and occupation (Conditions 5-7) and landscape screening (Condition 3), no objections are raised and the proposal is recommended for approval.

This page is intentionally left blank